



El Rio Watercourse Master Plan

Project Background

The Flood Control District of Maricopa County (District) began work on the El Rio Watercourse Master Plan (WCMP) in August, 2002. The study area for the WCMP covers a 17.5 mile reach of the Gila River from the Agua Fria River westward to the SR 85 bridge.

The goal for the WCMP is to provide a flood protection strategy that preserves the heritage of the river and is consistent with a long-term, multi-use vision for the river corridor.

The project team completed the first and second phases of the study which included the collection of data and the identification of any known flooding hazards. A newsletter was mailed to property owners in the study area in June 2003 detailing the data collection results.

In September of 2003, the project team had just begun the third phase of the study which was to formulate both structural and non-structural flood control alternatives. However, that same month the WCMP was put on hold indefinitely pending the outcome of a lawsuit involving an area several miles downstream of the project area. The outcome of the lawsuit had the potential to affect which alternatives could be considered for this WCMP thereby necessitating the delay.

The project team was given approval to resume work on the WCMP in September of 2004 and we are currently pursuing an aggressive new project schedule which includes multiple opportunities for public input.

Project Update

Although the project team was unable to continue with the alternatives formulation phase of the WCMP, planning moved forward on implementation components of the study. Specifically, plans were formalized for the development of an

Educational Research and Development Pilot Project located along the Gila River in Estrella Mountain Regional Park.

Additionally, the West Valley has continued to grow at a rapid rate and several new projects are now taking place within the study area. These projects include the King Ranch Development and the proposed Cotton Lane Bridge. Project team members are working with leaders of these and other projects so that all future efforts are integrated into one seamless master plan.

New Project Timeline

The District and the project team have put together a new timeline to complete the remainder of work on the WCMP which includes the development of alternatives, selection of a recommended alternative, and an implementation plan.

The alternatives formulation phase is scheduled to be complete near the end of March 2005. Those alternatives will then be refined to identify a recommended alternative. That phase is expected to be finished by June 2005. The public will be updated following each of these two phases via newsletters and public meetings.



Educational Research & Development Pilot

The El Rio Educational Research and Development Pilot Project will test the viability of replacing dense, mono-typical stands of salt cedar (tamarisk) with diverse stands of cottonwood, willow, and other native plants historically found in the Gila River floodplain. The Pilot effort is needed to support environmentally responsible flood mitigation along the Gila River, and will be designed to improve existing river hydraulics, water quality, water quantity, and wildlife habitat while reducing flood hazards in the area. The vegetative treatments will be designed to insure that wildlife habitat is maintained over time as salt cedar is replaced. Located in Estrella Mountain Regional Park, the 10-acre site will have a parking area with an educational kiosk and a trail system, which can be used by the public to see the results of the various vegetative treatments. The pilot will serve as a demonstration in support of the El Rio Watercourse Master Plan by expanding the knowledge base for local non-structural flood control concepts.

Contact Information

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For regular updates on the El Rio WCMP or to download copies earlier newsletters, please visit the District's Web site at: [www.fcd.maricopa.gov/Neighborhood/Active Projects](http://www.fcd.maricopa.gov/Neighborhood/Active%20Projects)



El Rio WCMP Project Area



Maricopa County Board of Supervisors
District 4 - Max Wilson
District 5 - Mary Rose Wilcox

El Rio WCMP Public Meeting Dates

The District is holding public meetings to update property owners and residents on the status of the WCMP, present the Research and Development Pilot Project, and to share the new timeline for the completion of the project.

This will be the second set of public meeting for the WCMP. Each meeting will take place from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. and a short presentation will begin at 6:15 p.m. Following the presentation, District staff and members of the project team will be available to answer questions or address any concerns.

This plan is a joint effort between the District, the City of Avondale, the Town of Buckeye, and the City of Goodyear. This project is strongly supported by the Board of Supervisors and has gained a great deal of support from local municipalities, federal and state agencies, and other stakeholders. The study team is also focused on gaining the support of area residents. Therefore, we invite and encourage your involvement and support.

Wednesday, December 8
Buckeye Community Center
201 E Centre
Buckeye, Arizona 85326

Tuesday, December 14
Estrella Mountain Community College
North Community Room
3000 North Dysart Rd
Avondale, Arizona 85323

Flood Control District
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Phoenix AZ 85009